

OUR WOMEN IN THE WAR.

DEAR AUNT KATE.

A STORY OF A WOMAN'S DEVOTION.

Mrs. C. E. Means, of Spartanburg, S. C., in Charleston Weekly News.

In this sketch I must, to enable the reader to appreciate the character of the heroine, touch momentarily on her life before the war, make you acquainted with Aunt Kate and her husband. He was a man of uncommon personal beauty, of the purest type, tall, broad-shouldered, erect. The red blood colored his cheeks, and his hair, the yellow hair, worn in those days several inches long, had a gleam of gold amid its curls. The blue eyes were violet in their shining depths, and the white teeth, even and strong, filled a well-shaped mouth. With all this beauty there was nothing untoward about his appearance.

Aunt Kate herself was tall and slender, a handsome brunette. In the parlance of the country neighborhood, "they were in an uncommonly nice couple." She was a fine housekeeper; her good manager, and an early Eden was ever at hand from sorrow or sin than when the war came.

The man, of the type I have sought to describe, was of the material of which the best soldiers are made. Among the very first volunteers were found to follow him, for better or worse, the fortunes of the Confederacy.

Aunt Kate suffered quietly but very keenly from the separation, but at once identified herself with the work to be done for the country. Men were to fight; she was to work, as well as to pray. She gave her personal attention to the details of plantation work. She was up by daylight, attended to the feeding of horses and cattle, rode over the fields to see that the work was done as it should be, looked after the plantation supplies, sick negroes; in short, displayed such energy that the whole neighborhood talked of her extraordinary management.

LETTERS TO THE ABSENT ONE.

At night, after the little children were in bed, she wrote to her husband, filling pages with her loving words. In regard to the little matter, yet never relating her troubles, repeating instead the smart sayings of the children and making jokes about their quaint old neighbors. As she expressed it, when speaking of her letters, "I don't let my husband know I am writing him, but I let him know I am writing him." She kept me posted about everything at home; even sends me a piece of every dress she makes for herself or the children, and then writes me which they're worn during the day.

There was a shop on the plantation when the war began, but soon she had athered a fine flock, and watched their increase as if it were gold. She raised indigo, and when the autumn came she had a splendid array of warm jeans—spun, woven, cut and made by her own hands, to send to her soldier husband. He almost seemed to grudge that any and but her's should do anything for him.

Every few weeks a box of dainty preserves, sent to her by her own hands, roasted turkey, baked chickens, pies, cakes, preserves and pickles. Even after the troops were sent to Virginia, all this she contrived to send frequent boxes of edibles, until she had the reputation of being the best keeper of a woman's wife in the regiment.

His last visit home was just before the opening of our troops into Pennsylvania. When he left for a few weeks Aunt Kate seemed entirely crushed. She had a sinking feeling, as if the war were over, when the news of the battle of Gettysburg came, and in the list of missing, of Company K, First Regiment of rifles, was the name of her husband. Lost of his friends gave up hope and believed him dead; she would not think of it.

WAITING AND WATCHING.

It was wonderful how many ways she undertook to learn some word of her husband's fate, but every effort was fruitless. With agonizing interest she read papers, watching each proposal made by the Confederacy for an exchange of prisoners. "If only I were North," she would sigh, "I could see my husband, or humanity's sake to accede."

The horrors of Andersonville were a ringing grief to the whole South, yet the cruel policy of war caused the United States to reject all terms of exchange for prisoners. The superciliousness of the handwriting, but she knew it as the handwriting of her own dear husband. With a glad cry she opened and read the words: "I am exchanged; have been for months at Fort Davidson, from the cold, cruelty and starvation encountered there, I am nearly dead, and I have to live no more."

Aunt Kate did not seem to realize what her words conveyed. To her they only led her to live, and she would soon be with him again.

At once she took her children to the place where they might stay, and she went to Savannah to meet him. She went immediately to the nearest depot, but she told that the Government had taken possession of the road for the transportation of troops and provisions, and no exchange was given to any one. She then went to the depot, and there she met him. After encountering many difficulties she succeeded in obtaining an interview with the General in command, and from him got an order to be allowed passage on the railroad to Charleston, accompanied by personal application, and earnest supplication, she got a pass to Savannah.

ON THE ARRIVAL IN SAVANNAH.

On her arrival in Savannah she encountered the greatest confusion. Sherman had ordered the city only a few days before her. Aunt Kate now had a knowledge of heroism fully tested. She was alone in a city just conquered by an invading army; confusion was on hand. The Confederate bills, which she had provided herself were no more than the brown leaves shivering in the winter's blast. Unfortunately, however, the heroic woman looked upon the country as a conquered one. She learned where the sick Confederates were to be found. The building used as a hospital was full of wards, but she could find no one in authority to give her a word of information or advice. She then turned to the streets, and there she met him, hoping she might find her husband, was a sickening sight. The poor exchanged men were as ghastly as rats, and, sores, and starvation can make poor man. Ah! it was pitiful! United States soldiers, now it had enough, and to spare, yet had starved and tormented thousands of men, thrown by the fortunes of war to their hands. Sherman said: "War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it!"

But the world never yet has justified England for the treatment of the prisoner of Helena. Aunt Kate gazed at each cot in passing. One poor man she noticed whose form was attenuated until he seemed a living skeleton. One eye was out with scurvy; the other was closed as if he was asleep, but his face was contorted with pain. She passed on a few paces, growing for the first time sick at heart with apprehension that her husband might be like one of these. Overcome by the thought a sudden faintness attacked her and she leaned for a moment for support against a pillar near by.

A SAD MEETING.

Standing there, her limbs trembling, depressed and disheveled, she heard her name spoken in faint tones: "Kate! Kate!"

She thought surely her senses mocked her. The voice was husky and not familiar. Again she heard the words: "Oh, Kate, don't you hear?"

It was the man whom she had thought was asleep. She looked back at the cot and saw the poor wretch held out to her, and she knew then that she had found her husband only, she felt, to see him die. But not here! Not in the common hospital!

She at once sought out a pastor of one of the city churches, and with her quite dignity told her situation. The clergyman had a large house, and assisted her in finding her husband into a pleasant room, procured for her by the clergyman. More he could not do, for there was illness in his own family and the servants bitten by the wild idea of freedom, having nothing to do, had run away, and Aunt Kate had, without help, to care for her poor sick soldier. The long lights of stars of the tall city house were weary to climb; the water-carrying, fuel-bringing and cooking were hard tasks, in addition to the constant care of an invalid, to one unaccustomed to such duties. Still the devoted woman did not know she was tired in the hour of supreme trial.

GALLANT FEDERAL SOLDIERS.

The sick man, under the inspiration of his presence, believed himself able to get home. His constant prayer was to see his children again and his wife dearest. He was refused. She went to the Federal commandant, and begged for transportation for her husband, who was an exchanged prisoner. No man could be so brave enough to be unmoved by her story. Not only did the Federal General give him a pass, but he also gave him a transportation on the boat to Port Royal, but also sent an ambulance to carry them to the wharf and detailed a soldier to help them on board.

Although Aunt Kate lost, through the cruel policy once did they fail to tell the husband, yet she always remembers that, in her sore hour of need, from the highest officer to the common Yankee soldier, she received from our enemies help and sympathy. In that sad journey home, she was helped by the kindness of a helpless man tenderly and proffer assistance to the sad woman who attended him.

At Hardeeville she came to her lines. One of the men who was sent to meet her, a man named by the name of Hester, heart glad to get home. But the need for every man in our ranks was inexorable, and the application for him to be allowed to go as far as Charleston was refused. Every day, but in a sad state of confusion, transportation for our sick and wounded was very inadequate.

Between Charleston and Columbia Aunt Kate felt that her husband was sinking under the fatigue and discomfort encountered. It seemed to her more than she could bear, to have him so near the goal of his earthly desire and yet fall. But such came.

One of the most beautiful features of our women at the War, the Homes, provided by our women at various points. In them our soldiers, far from their homes, had gaping wounds dressed, throbbing teeth bathed, and, without money or price, found food, rest, sympathy and love. There was the lovely mission of old Mrs. Roe. Unwearingly she visited the trains for many months, feeding the sick and wounded, and, if it were not for her, many of our brave men would have perished.

GOING HOME TO DIE.

After resting here for two days, the flame of life burned again more steadily and the devoted wife felt that she might yet take her husband home, and satisfy his one remaining wish—to again see his children. She was refused, but she went on fresh difficulty; there a friend met her, and the next day she reached her father's house. Her husband had his heart's desire; two days later he was living, and the gates.

For many days Aunt Kate was ill, but she lived, went to her home, reared her children, and has done her daily duty as a woman throughout the great Southland have nobly done. As a people we are happy in this, that the proud of our struggle and not ashamed of our defeat.

The world still points, as an illustration of the highest courage, to the Army of the Southern Confederacy and to the Women of the Southern States in the great civil war as examples of matchless devotion.

In writing my sketch I have drawn the skeleton of the trials of Aunt Kate, and not undertaken the details of her experience. Pages might have been written, but it would have been to paint the life, to throw a perfume on the story, or add another line to the rainbow.

Will Read Either Way.

Our young friends have heard of palindromes—words or lines that read the same backward as forward. The London *Truth*, simply make sense read word by word either way:

"Solomon had vast treasures—silver and gold—things precious. Happy and rich and wise he was. Faithfully served he God, and he was good."

WRECKED BY ANOTHER CYCLONE.

Uses Blown Away, Trains Wrecked and Lives Lost.

FLOWERY BRANCH, April 15.—During the terrible rain storm the house of Mr. Worth Strickland, near this place, was struck with lightning, killing Mr. Strickland instantly and terribly shocking his child. The child may recover.

TEN PERSONS KILLED BY THE STORM.

GRIFFIN, April 15.—News has reached this city this afternoon that a most terrible cyclone visited upper Pike and the Eastern portion of Meriwether, near Sandtown, about three o'clock this morning. The same old, but sad story of houses being blown to atoms; trees, fences and everything, given with the mad fury of the whirling wind. Six persons are known to have been killed here, and several others injured. Four negroes were killed on Mr. Powell's place in Meriwether. Numbers of persons were fatally wounded. The direction of the storm was Northeast. It divided, and electricity and deafening peals of thunder, was most startling here.

NEGRO CHILDREN TOSSED BY THE WINDS.

LA GRANGE, April 15.—A cyclone passed over a half mile Southeast of town about 1 o'clock last night. On the Hamilton road, where it crossed, the house of Mr. Pete Nelson, colored, was moved from its foundation. Mr. J. W. Cooper's plantation, two miles from town, his gin house and some out houses were destroyed. Five miles from town, on the Greenville road, Mr. A. E. Roberson's barn, stables, some out houses and several negroes, and fencing were scattered broadcast. It is also reported that several negro children had been blown away and one killed. Further on, it struck the house of Mr. Pete Nelson, colored, and everything except the dwelling house, killing some mules and breaking the thigh of a negro man. A negro girl was killed on Mr. Bosley's farm, and other destruction to property.

A NEGRO KILLED NEAR ATHENS.

ATHENS, April 15.—A negro was killed by lightning at a store about six miles from Athens. Several negroes, and the store to get out of the rain, when lightning struck the chimney and ran down on the inside. The negro, George Johnson, was leaning against the chimney when the lightning struck him on the top of the head, passing down his body to the floor. He died instantly. Another boy had his foot on the piece of it, and it tore his shoe to pieces with out hurting him.

HOUSES SWEPT AWAY.

HOGANVILLE, Ga., April 15.—About six miles west here cyclones passed from Atlanta. Several houses, Daniel Owen's house were destroyed and barn burnt up. Alexander Allison lost all his buildings but his dwelling. Rufin Booker have no house standing this morning. The house of Mr. James Dollar was not left one piece of timber upon another. J. Allsbrook's lost his chimneys. Bill Woodford had his house blown away. Mrs. Frances Woodford lost all her out houses and the house of Mr. J. W. Langford was blown down and narrowly escaped destruction. William Humphries lost, together with his dwelling, every house on his place. Union church (Baptist) was blown to atoms.

THE FLOOD AT BIRMINGHAM.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., April 15.—The heaviest rain ever known in this section began falling here last night at seven o'clock, continuing until eleven p. m. The rainfall was five inches in that time. Village creek, the source of the water supply for this city, rose nearly seven feet in the pump house in four hours, time, extinguishing the fires and doing considerable damage to the engine. Coalburg bridge, over this creek, was washed several feet out of line. The houses near the creek were inundated and the city of Birmingham was threatened by climbing to the top of the house. All the railroads leading here were badly damaged, and the wires were down, making it impossible to get full particulars. The Georgia Pacific had washouts between Macon and Anniston, delaying all the trains.

THE TERRORS OF FIRE.

On the Alabama and Great Southern, at Atlanta, sixty miles above here, the lightning struck the depot and hotel, setting fire to and consuming both, with the freight, baggage papers. The incendiary was captured.

FIVE PERSONS KILLED IN CHIPLEY.

CHIPLEY, Ga., April 15.—A terrific cyclone struck the Southern portion of Chipleigh at 2 o'clock this morning, sweeping everything in its path. Its course was from Southwest to Northeast. The loss of life and property was great. The Chipleigh house destroyed, and the house of Mrs. Champion, D. J. E. Thornton, E. F. McGehee, R. B. Taylor, A. J. Irvin, W. H. Layfield, John Langford and A. P. Hampton. One mile and a half west of Chipleigh, the residence of John Langford, Mrs. Mary Davis and Mr. J. W. Culpepper, were destroyed. The following is a list of the dead: Mr. Lee Alfred, Mrs. John Langford and two children.

SEVEN PERSONS INJURED.

For many days Mrs. Lee Alfred and seven children injured painfully. A. J. Irvin, thought to be fatally injured; William Langford, bruised painfully in the chest; Mrs. Mary Davis was fearfully lacerated; Mr. J. E. Thornton, arm bruised, and many others injured slightly.

A mass meeting of citizens was held at the city hall to-night and committees were appointed to canvass this and adjoining counties for the relief of the sufferers. This is one of the most disastrous cyclones that has ever struck Harris County.

THE WRECK AT CHATTANOOGA.

A heavy rain storm passed over this section last night, causing considerable destruction to property. The telegraph wires were blown down, the railroad washed out, delaying all trains. It is impossible to estimate the damage, as the trains on most all the roads have been abandoned, including those to Atlanta, and passengers are compelled to travel by the Western and Atlantic, Tennessee and Georgia to reach the city. On the Alabama Great Southern road, near Atlanta, Ala., the bridge is thrown out of line, and all the trains are unable to pass. The Western and Atlantic road has suffered most. On the East Tennessee road, near Tecumseh, Ala., the creeks had become so swollen that a bridge near that place was washed away, as well as a large portion of the track.

THE HEAVIEST RAIN EVER KNOWN.

MARIETTA, April 15.—The rainfall last night was the heaviest ever known here. During the day and night it fell to the depth of seven and one-fourth inches. No train went through on the Marietta and North Georgia Railroad on account of the washouts.

TWO MEN GO DOWN.

ROME, April 15.—Dispatches received to-night states that at the Alabama furnace, on the Anniston and Atlanta railway, the bridge gave way while two men were standing on it, and both were drowned. Along Choccolocco creek the destruction by wind and water is very great. The track on the East Tennessee railroad at Weavers and other stations is completely submerged. Railroad travel is entirely suspended.

ROME UNDER WATER.

ROME, April 15.—The details of last night's storm are coming in. It was severe in all portions of the County. A large number of barns and out houses were blown down and a vast amount of fencing destroyed. Numbers of mules and horses were killed and many injured. In several instances barns were struck by lightning and totally or partially destroyed. No care of loss of life or injury to persons is yet reported.

THE STORM AND OOSTANAU RIVERS ROSE AT A TREMENDOUS RATE LAST NIGHT. The Oostanau rose fourteen feet, and being backed up by the Etowah. The danger of the freshet here is very great. At this hour the rivers are still rising rapidly. The merchants are moving their goods and the prospects now are that Broad Street will be navigable for a week or two. All railroad connection is cut off and no mails have been received to-day. Advances received state that at Calhoun the Oostanau is rising 15 inches an hour, and is nearing the high water mark of 1881. The Etowah has been rising in all directions, and the damage is very great.

THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION SAYS OF THE STORM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES:

The storm of Monday night may be recorded as bringing the heaviest rain ever known in Atlanta. It was tropical in its fierceness. The lightning was blinding and the thunder almost continuous; hail and wind added to the steady roar of the rain fall. For two hours the scene was a fearful one, and many families crept from their beds, dressed and gathered in some central room. The storm reached its height about 2 o'clock.

By seven o'clock there was perfect calm. The sun shone brightly, and brought surprising warmth. The city was as clean as a daisy having been swept by the whirling torrents. No casualties are reported in the city. The trains on most of the railroads are delayed, and the washouts are reported. With a dreadful accident on the Western and Atlantic railroad. The details of the storm will be found below.

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THE TWO ACCIDENTS WERE PRODUCTIVE OF three instant and horrible deaths and an enormous loss to property. They were opened within fifteen minutes of the same time, and were only a mile apart, but neither knew of the other. The first accident occurred just two miles South of Big Shanty on a big fill which was twenty feet high. The train was a two men were washed into eternity and thousands of dollars worth of property was destroyed. The other accident happened nearly two miles North of Big Shanty and resulted in the horrible death of a passenger train and hundreds of pounds of mail matter.

The heavy rains which fell Tuesday morning was the direct cause of the accidents and when the trains made their start on Tuesday morning, the sky was covered with heavy clouds and the darkness was intense while the resting, whistling winds made the night hideous.

At 1:50 o'clock Tuesday morning sections of freight train No. 8 left Big Shanty for Atlanta. The engine was under the control of Mr. S. A. McDonald, an engineer of ability and worth, who had for his fireman Mr. Ed McCulloch, while the train was under the control of Mr. J. W. Langford, a fireman of ability and worth. When the train passed away from Big Shanty the rain was pouring down but the train's crew was happy for a few more hours only were required to put them to rest. The engine was under the control of Mr. J. W. Langford, a fireman of ability and worth, who had for his fireman Mr. Ed McCulloch, while the train was under the control of Mr. J. W. Langford, a fireman of ability and worth.

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THE PASSENGER'S PLUNGE.

In less than a quarter of an hour after the freight train went down, the passenger train due in Atlanta at 3:40 a. m. came rushing along the road over which the freight had gone in safety. The train was composed of a mail car, two coaches and a baggage car. The engine was a large one, and the train was very fast. The train was in the middle of the bridge when it struck the wreckage of the freight train, and the passenger train was thrown into the air. The train was in the middle of the bridge when it struck the wreckage of the freight train, and the passenger train was thrown into the air.

LAZY FARM, ALA., 1884.—After ten we lingered as usual around the table; each having some anecdote or incident of school days to relate, when Cliff remembered the unfinished letter. "Let's see," said he, "whether Cousin Betsy went back to school or not. Where did I leave off reading?"

"Where else was I but at school," I'd a druther he'd written a lick in his life, and I found out afterwards that he had gin old Westfield orders not to touch the weight of a hickory on the risk of his life; and I know in reason I must or needed a thousand. He kept me skinned up anyhow I pin it at me, and I tried to hide up all my devilment from him. I'd git the scholars all to gittin', then I'd look as solemn as old brother Cole or old Arminy Pennington, and I'd say, 'Betsy, I've never suspicion me. Sometimes he'd point at me and say to others: 'Now, why can't you all behave like Betsy?'

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